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STRANGE TALES MARVEL COMICS GROUP™

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STRANGE TALES™ FEATURING:

# WARLOCK™



I WARNED YOU,  
WARLOCK!

THERE'S NO  
ESCAPE  
FROM THE...

-- MADNESS  
MONSTER

STARLIN  
and  
WEISS

Born to be Earth's man of the future, then forced to abandon his native planet because of his alien ways, he wanders the stars seeking LIFE! Gifted with ultra-strength, paranormal reflexes and perceptions, the power of levitation and the curse of a vampire soul-gem, he stands uniquely ALONE among the heavens.

**Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE POWER OF WARLOCK!™**

# 1000 CLOWNS!

A TALE OF MADNESS AND FUTILITY,  
IN WHICH OUR ASTRAL AVENGER  
ASKS THE QUESTIONS...



WHERE  
AM I?

AND HOW  
DID I  
GET HERE?

THIS STORY IS  
DEDICATED TO  
STEVE DITKO,  
WHO GAVE US  
ALL A DIFFERENT  
REALITY.

LEN WEIN  
EDITING

AL MILGROM  
INKING

TOM ORZECZOWSKI  
LETTERING

JIM STARLIN  
INSANITY

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WELL, ADAM, IT APPEARS NONE OF THE FREE-FLOATING INANIMATE OBJECTS IN THIS STRANGE WORLD ARE GOING TO ANSWER YOU! SO...

...IT'S ONCE AGAIN UP TO YOU TO INVENT YOUR OWN EXPLANATIONS! REVIEWING THE PAST MAY POSSIBLY SHED SOME LIGHT ON MY PRESENT SITUATION!

AS I RECALL, I HAD FINALLY CONFRONTED THE MATRIARCH, THE TEMPORAL LEADER OF THE INSIDIOUS UNIVERSAL CHURCH OF TRUTH! THIS BLACK RELIGION WORSHIPS THE MAGUS, MY SINISTER OTHER SELF, AND THE TRUE POWER BEHIND THE MATRIARCH'S REIGN OF TERROR!



I HAD BEEN FOOLISH ENOUGH TO BELIEVE I MIGHT TERRORIZE MUCH-NEEDED INFORMATION ABOUT MY ALTER EGO FROM THE MATRIARCH, BUT THE CLEVER WOMAN-PRIEST TURNED THE TABLES ON ME BY SETTING ONE OF HER CREATURES UPON ME!

I WAS FINALLY FORCED TO USE MY VAMPIRE SOUL-GEM TO DEFEAT THE MONSTER, NOT REALIZING THAT ABSORBING ITS SOUL INTO MYSELF WOULD BE TOO MUCH FOR MY FRAIL MIND TO ACCEPT! THE MONSTROSITY'S THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS WERE SO ALIEN, I HAD TO ESCAPE INTO OBLIVION TO SAVE MY SANITY!

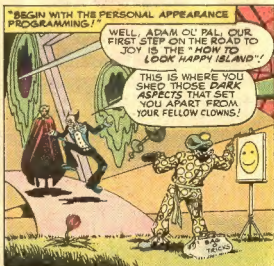
BUT I NOW REALIZE THAT AS THE LAST BITS OF REALITY FLED FROM MY CONSCIOUSNESS, I FELT COLD INHUMAN HANDS GRIP ME AND DROP ME INTO A NEARBY PIT.



"YET HOW I CAME TO WHEREVER I AM NOW REMAINS A MYSTERY!"







ISN'T THAT MUCH NICER? NOW YOU CAN GO ANYWHERE AND LOOK LIKE EVERYONE ELSE!

YOU'LL BE MUCH HAPPIER BEING PART OF SOCIETY! IT'S MUCH BETTER THAN BEING AN OUTSIDER, A CRIMINAL OR A MADMAN!

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF YOUR NEW FACE?



A MASTERPIECE...?

LENS, IT'S TRUE THAT MANY OF THE THINGS THAT MAKE ME WHAT I AM, MAY DISTURB OTHERS AS WELL AS MYSELF...

TO HIDE THAT WHICH IS TRULY THERE WOULD BE A LIE!

I COULD NOT BE HAPPY LIVING IN SUCH A MANNER!

WE'LL NOT FORCE YOU TO DO ANYTHING! WE'RE NOT TYRANTS HERE!

IF YOU WANT TO MAKE THINGS HARD FOR YOURSELF, GO RIGHT AHEAD!

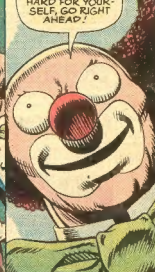
THIS ISN'T GOING WELL AT ALL! THE DISTORTION IS GETTING WORSE, AND HE'S REBELLING!



...BUT I DON'T BELIEVE COVERING THEM WITH PAINT AND RUBBER BALLS WILL DISPEL THEM!



SURE, ADAM, HAVE IT YOUR OWN WAY!



IT'S THE EQUIVALENT OF MIDNIGHT ON HOMEWORLD, BIRTHPLACE OF THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH OF TRUTH!



THE ROYAL GUARD AT THE HOLY PALACE CHANGES WATCH AT THIS TIME!

RHAGOR, A BLACK KNIGHT, HAS JUST BEEN RELIEVED OF DUTY FOR THE EVENING, AND NOW TRUDGES OFF INTO THE NIGHT!



HIS DESTINATION IS HOME AND REST!



HIS DESTINY IS IRON-STRONG FINGERS GRIPPING HIS TUNIC AND...



COLD STEEL PRESSING AGAINST HIS THROAT!

I WISH TO SPEAK TO YOU!





I WISH TO KNOW WHERE THE PRISONER CALLED WARLOCK IS BEING KEPT!



...AND YOU'D BEST TELL HER, OR PREPARE TO FACE THE WRATH OF PIP THE TROLL, THE DEADLIEST SHOT IN ALL OF SPACE!

GAMORA!

WHAT'D YOU SAY? SPEAK UP!

SURE... SURE, I'LL TELL YOU ANYTHING YOU WANT TO KNOW... JUST KEEP HER AWAY FROM ME!



HER?? LISTEN, I'M THE ONE YOU SHOULD BE SCARED OF...

OOPS!

HE'S BEING KEPT IN THE SUB-BASEMENT OF THE PALACE, THE SECTION CALLED THE PIT!



WHY THERE?

@#\*% GUN!

THAT'S WHERE THEY RECONDITION PEOPLE!



YOU'VE BEEN VERY HELPFUL! THANK YOU!

YOU MAY GO NOW!



HEY, THAT GUY ALMOST DROPPED A BRICK WHEN HE SAW YOU, LADY!

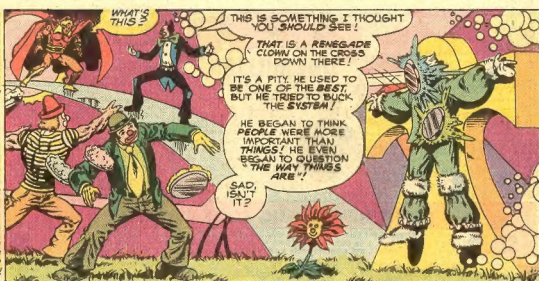
YOU'VE BEEN HOLDING OUT ON ME, BABES. THERE'S MORE TO YOU THAN MEETS THE EYE!

FACT IS, I DON'T EVEN KNOW YOUR NAME!

I GO BY MANY NAMES, MY TICK-RIDDEN TROLL, BUT I'M SURE THE ONE THAT BLACK KNIGHT KNEW ME BY IS...

...GAMORA, THE DEADLIEST WOMAN IN THE WHOLE GALAXY!





WHAT'S THIS?

THIS IS SOMETHING I THOUGHT YOU SHOULD SEE!

THAT IS A RENEGADE CLOWN ON THE CROSS DOWN THERE!

IT'S A PITY, HE USED TO BE ONE OF THE BEST, BUT HE TRIED TO BUCK THE SYSTEM!

HE BEGAN TO THINK PEOPLE WERE MORE IMPORTANT THAN THINGS! HE EVEN BEGAN TO QUESTION THE WAY THINGS ARE!"

SAD, ISN'T IT?



I TRIED! I PLAYED THE GAME AS LONG AS I COULD... JUST COULDN'T TAKE IT ANY LONGER... BUT YOU WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND!

THEN AGAIN, MAYBE I WOULD!



NOW ADAM, DON'T MISINTERPRET ALL THIS! WHAT WE'RE DOING HERE IS FOR THE CLOWN'S OWN GOOD AND FOR THE GOOD OF THE SYSTEM!

HEY! WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?



SPLOOT!



THIS IS OUTRAGEOUS! HIS PROGRAMMING HAS GONE COMPLETELY BERSERK!

HE'S JUST KNOCKED MY TWO ASSISTANTS UNCONSCIOUS!



THEN YOU'D BEST SUMMON NEW PROGRAMMERS AND FINISH THE TASK I'VE ASSIGNED YOU!

YOUR HOLINESS... THE MATRIARCH!!

I DIDN'T HEAR YOU ENTER!



I BELIEVE IT'S TIME FOR A REPORT UPDATE ON ADAM WARLOCK'S RECONDITIONING!

I'M AFRAID WE'RE HAVING A LITTLE...TROUBLE, YOUR HOLINESS!

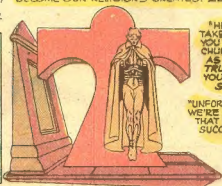
AS YOU KNOW, WE'RE TRYING TO TRANSFORM THE PRISONER'S INDEPENDANT AND CRIMINAL WAYS INTO A USEFUL AND SOCIALLY ACCEPTABLE LIFE STYLE!

TO DO THIS, WE MUST CONVINCE HIM THAT HIS PAST LIFE HAS BEEN WRONGLY USED!



THROUGH THE USE OF WILL-NUMBING DRUGS AND THE SENSORY INPUT HELMET WARLOCK IS WEARING, WE'RE ABLE TO IMPOSE SELECT SCENES UPON HIS CONSCIOUSNESS, DESIGNED TO CONVERT HIM OVER TO THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH'S WAY OF THINKING!

\*IF WE'RE SUCCESSFUL, ADAM WARLOCK WILL BECOME OUR RELIGION'S GREATEST ZEALOT!



\*HE WOULD TAKE ANYTHING YOU SAY AS THE CHURCH'S HEAD AS ABSOLUTE TRUTH! HE'D BE YOUR ETERNAL SLAVE!

\*UNFORTUNATELY, WE'RE NOT DOING THAT WELL AT SUCCEEDING!



"THE PROGRAMMING IS BEING DISTORTED BY WARLOCK'S OVERLY STRONG FREE WILL! INSTEAD OF SEEING US AS HEROES OF THE CHURCH GUIDING HIM TO A NEW LIFE, WE'RE CLOWNS TO HIM!"

HE TWISTS EVERYTHING WE SAY OR DO TO HIS OWN VIEWPOINT!

CLOWNS...HOW AMUSING!

IT'S PRETTY OBVIOUS TO ME THAT YOU'RE APPROACHING THIS PROBLEM FROM THE WRONG ANGLE!



YOU'RE NOT DEALING WITH A WEAKLING. PROF. TEANS! THIS MAN WON'T BE THREATENED INTO DOING WHAT'S RIGHT!

CONVINCE WARLOCK IT WOULD BE HARDER TO STAND WITH US THAN AGAINST US! THE FOOL IS EASILY TAKEN IN BY A CHALLENGE!



EXPLAIN THE GALAXY-SPANNING PROJECTS THE CHURCH IS WORKING ON! SHOW HIM THE GOOD HE CAN DO BY JOINING US!

PORTRAY THE CHURCH AS THE POOR STRUGGLING UNDERDOG AGAINST THE COSMIC GIANT ANARCHY! SUCCEED IN THIS AND HE IS OURS!

I'LL CHECK BACK WITH YOU LATER!



I'LL BE EXPECTING TO SEE RESULTS BY THEN!

WELL, THAT SHOULD ASSURE SUCCESS! WITH THE THREAT OF MY DISPLEASURE HANGING OVER HIS HEAD, PROF. TEARS WILL SHATTER ADAM'S 'OVERLY STRONG FREE WILL' IN RECORD TIME!

BEFORE THE DAY BREAKS, THAT GOLDEN GLADIATOR WILL BE MY EVER-OBEDIENT SERVANT!

STILL, IN A CERTAIN WAY, I'LL BE SAD TO SEE THAT HAPPEN!

CLOWNS...  
WHAT A MIND!

BUT... ONCE HE'S UNDER MY CONTROL, IT WON'T BE TOO DIFFICULT TO ENSLAVE WARLOCK'S OTHER SELF, THE MAGUS, ALSO!

AFTER ALL, HIS VERY EXISTANCE WILL DEPEND UPON MY GOLDEN SLAVE STAYING HEALTHY!

I'M SURE THE MAGUS WOULD BE MORE THAN HAPPY TO DO MY BIDDING, KNOWING THAT IF HE DIDN'T, I'D ORDER HIS ALTER EGO TO GO KILL HIMSELF!

I ONLY HOPE IT NEVER COMES TO THAT, FOR IF KILLING WARLOCK ELIMINATES ANY CHANCE OF THE MAGUS EXISTING... MY KINGDOM WILL NEVER COME INTO BEING, EITHER!

WELL, MY FINE LADY, IT'S ALL OR NOTHING THIS TIME! SO, ROLL THE DICE AND TO HELL WITH TOMORROW!

CLOWNS...

WHILE LESS THAN A MILE AWAY!

HEY!! WHERE WE GOING IN SUCH A HURRY?

TO FREE YOUR FRIEND WARLOCK!

BUT HE'S BEING HELD IN THE HOLY PALACE, AND THAT PLACE IS FULL OF HUNDREDS OF TRIGGER-HAPPY GUARDS!

YES, AND THEIR FAVORITE TARGETS ARE TROLLS!



STILL COMING?

SURE, RIGHT BEHIND YOU!

I MUST SAY, UP TO NOW YOU'VE NOT BEEN OVERLY COOPERATIVE, ADAM!

BUT I UNDERSTAND WHY!

YOU THINK WE'RE TRYING TO MOLD YOU INTO A DIFFERENT PERSON FOR OUR OWN PETTY PURPOSES RATHER THAN FOR YOUR OWN GOOD!

WELL, YOU'RE WRONG!

YOU SEE, WE'VE BEEN PREPARING YOU TO BECOME PART OF THIS... THE GREATEST WORK FORCE IN THE GALAXY!

WHAT ARE THOSE CLOWNS HAULING? WHY, IT LOOKS LIKE GARBAGE!

"NO, NO, ADAM, NOT GARBAGE... BUILDING BLOCKS! THESE BRAVE SOULS ARE PART OF THE MOST AMBITIOUS PROJECT EVER ATTEMPTED BY CIVILIZED MAN!"

"I DON'T BELIEVE IT! THEY'RE BUILDING A GIANT TOWER OF TRASH!"

"BUT IS A GREAT TOWER OF TRASH."

"WHY?!"

"WHY? BECAUSE THIS IS WHAT THEY'VE ALWAYS DONE AND ALWAYS WILL DO."

"WAIT! LOOK! THE TOWER-- IT'S SWAYING! IT'S GOING TO COLLAPSE!"

"ALL THOSE CLOWNS WILL BE KILLED!"

"RELAX, ADAM! THIS ALSO ALWAYS HAPPENS! WE'VE COME TO EXPECT IT."

"WHY?"

"WHY?"

"WHY?"

"BECAUSE THAT'S THE WAY IT'S ALWAYS BEEN AND ALWAYS WILL BE!"

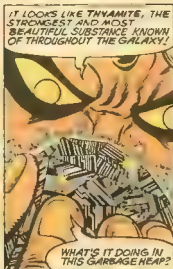
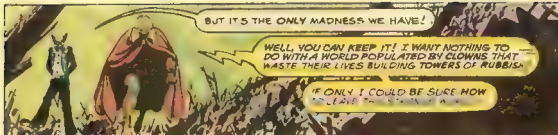
"TOMORROW THEY'LL BEGIN REBUILDING THE TOWER!"

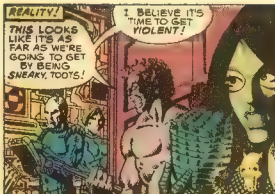
"THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW THE TOWER WILL COLLAPSE ONCE AGAIN!"

"LIFE IS A CYCLE, ADAM! YOU ALWAYS END UP JUST WHERE YOU STARTED, NO FURTHER!"

"THAT IS RULY MADNESS!"







REALITY!

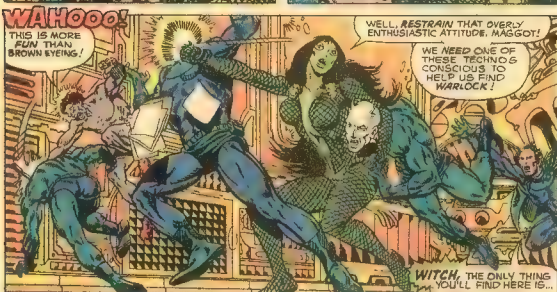
THIS LOOKS LIKE IT'S AS FAR AS WE'RE GOING TO GET BY BEING SNEAKY, TOOTS!

I BELIEVE IT'S TIME TO GET VIOLENT!



FOR, ONCE I AGREE WITH YOU!

LET'S TAKE THEM!



WAHOOO!

THIS IS MORE FUN THAN BROWN EYING!

WELL, RESTRAIN THAT OVERLY ENTHUSIASTIC ATTITUDE, MAGGOT!

WE NEED ONE OF THESE TECHNOS CONSCIOUS TO HELP US FIND WARLOCK!

WITCH, THE ONLY THING YOU'LL FIND HERE IS...



...DEATH!

MY HOW MELO-DRAMATIC!



UNFORTUNATELY, YOUR FLAIR FOR DYNAMIC ENTRANCES FAR SURPASSES ANY FIGHTING SKILL AN ICE BLUE CRETIN SUCH AS YOURSELF MIGHT POSSESS!



DON'T WORRY, BABES! I'LL HANDLE THIS CRUMB SNEAKING UP BEHIND YOU!

YOU MEATBAG!  
I WAS WELL PREPARED TO HANDLE HIS CLUMSY ATTACK!

# BUY THIS BOOK... OR HULK WILL ZMAZH!

\*AN UNSOLICITED  
TESTIMONIAL  
STRAIGHT FROM THE  
GREEN GOLIATH'S  
MOUTH, REGARDING  
THE LATEST  
(POSSIBLY THE  
GREATEST)  
**TREASURY  
EDITION**  
OF ALL!

FEATURING  
**100 PAGES**  
OF GREENSKIN'S  
GREATEST BATTLES WITH  
• **SUB-MARINER!**  
• **HERCULES!**  
• **THE EVER-LOVIN' THING!**  
• **DOC SAMSON!**  
AND MANY MORE!

EVERY PAGE A  
**GIANT-SIZED**  
**10" X 14"**

**P.L.U.S.!** A PULSE-POUNDING  
**PIN-UP!**  
THE SECRET PLANS OF  
PROJECT GREENSKIN!  
AN ACTION-PACKED  
ARTIST'S GALLERY!

AND JUST IN CASE YOUR NIFTY NEWS-  
DEALER DOESN'T HAVE THIS TLMULTIOUS  
TREASURY EDITION\* AND IF HE  
DOESN'T, THE HULK'S GONNA MAKE HIM  
SORRY! ) YOU CAN ORDER YOURS DIRECT  
FROM THE SLUGGING BULLPEN FOR JUST  
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JUST FILL OUT THE JADE-HUED COUPON  
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BEGIN!



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OKAY-- YOU WIN! ENCLOSED FIND MY \$2.00  
(WHICH INCLUDES 50¢ POSTAGE AND HANDLING)  
'CAUSE I DON'T WANNA BE STOMPED ON BY  
THE HULK! SO PLEASE SEND ME HIS STAR-  
STUDDED TREASURY EDITION AS SOON AS  
YOU CAN!

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ AGE: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_

STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

ALLOW 4 TO 6 WEEKS FOR DELIVERY



I WANTED MERELY TO RESTRAIN THAT ONE, NOT TOTAL HIM!

NOW, BECAUSE YOU ENJOY BASHING HEADS, WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO SEARCH THIS WHOLE LAB TO FIND WARLOCK!

SORRY, IT'S JUST THAT I ENJOY MY WORK, AND TEND TO GET OVERLY ZEALOUS!

NIGHTMARE!

NOW MUCH FARTHER TO THIS DOOR? IT SEEMS WE'VE BEEN WALKING THROUGH THESE COSMIC CORRIDORS FOR HOURS!

JUST OVER HERE!

SORRY ABOUT THE DISTANCE!

BUT IF WE KEPT THIS DOOR OF MADNESS ANY CLOSER, I MIGHT PROVE TOO MUCH OF A TEMPTATION FOR SOME OF THE WEAKER CLOWNS!

THERE IT IS!

ONCE YOU GO THROUGH THAT DOOR, YOU MAY NEVER BE ABLE TO RETURN!

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT IT MAY BE LIKE IN, THERE!

IT MIGHT BE A LIVING NIGHTMARE..

AGAIN, I BEG YOU TO RECONSIDER!

OR A WELCOME REST!

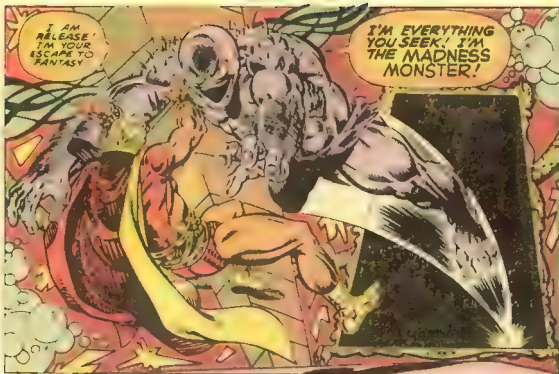
WHATEVER AWAITS ME BEYOND THIS THRESHOLD, I WELCOME!

WELCOME TO THE REALM OF SCHIZOPHRENIA, PARANOIA AND ANYTHING ELSE YOU MAY WANT TO EXPLORE

BETTER THE FREEDOM OF MADNESS THAN THE IMPRISONMENT OF THIS INSANE WORLD!

THOOM!

WHO?!



I AM  
RELEASE!  
I'M YOUR  
ESCAPE TO  
FANTASY

I'M EVERYTHING  
YOU SEEK! I'M  
THE MADNESS  
MONSTER!

**NO!**  
UNHAND ME!

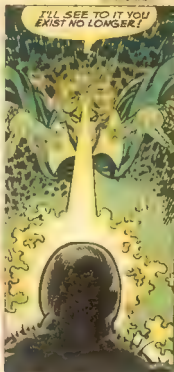
BUT YOU  
CAME TO ME!  
YOU SOUGHT  
MY SWEET  
CARESS!



**NO!** I DIDN'T REALIZE  
WHAT A DARK  
DEMON YOU  
TRULY ARE!

ONE SUCH AS  
YOU CAN ONLY  
BE EVIL -- SO  
IT'S THAT ONLY  
NO RIGHT  
TO EXIST

SO BY THE  
DARK FORCES  
OF CHAOS THAT  
ARE MINE TO  
CONTROL



I'LL SEE TO IT YOU  
EXIST NO LONGER!



I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS!  
NOTHING CAN RESIST  
MY SOUL GEM'S  
POWER!

YET  
YOU STAND  
UNAFFECTED!

**FOOL!** YOUR FOUL GEM  
CAUGHT MY EYE—  
WHO HAS NO SOUL!

NO SOUL  
NOW?!

ARGG!

THE  
PART  
OF MY  
SOUL

DO NOT  
WASTE  
YOUR  
TIME

THE  
PART  
OF MY  
SOUL

THE PART OF MY SOUL  
THAT I DARE NOT  
FACE

THE  
BLACK  
SECTION  
OF MY  
SOUL

I'M THE TWISTED EVIL THAT  
INFESTS YOUR INNER SELF!

I'M ALL THOSE  
FOUL THINGS YOU'VE  
EVER DARED  
DO!

**MADNESS  
MONSTER!**

HE  
CREATED  
THE  
MAGUS!





THAT'S WHY YOU MUST NOW COME TO ME! I AM YOUR ONLY CHANCE TO UNDERSTAND THE MAGUS!

LOOK AT ME FOR WHAT I TRULY AM, RATHER THAN WHAT YOU BELIEVE ME TO BE!

YOU CAME TO ME FOR THE KNOWLEDGE AND RELEASE YOU SENSED I OFFERED!

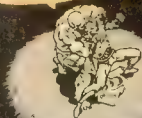
ACCEPT THIS AND ALL WILL BE WELL!

I AM THAT PART OF YOURSELF YOU NO LONGER DARE IGNORE! BY MYSELF I AM NOT TRULY EVIL!

I'M SIMPLY WHAT YOU MAKE OF ME!

FEAR ME AND I'LL DESTROY YOU!

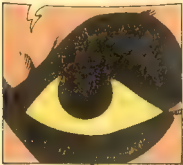
COME TO TERMS WITH ME AND YOU SHALL BE INVINCIBLE!



IT'S TRUE, YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN WITH ME YET I'VE DENIED YOU!

THE GOSSAMER VEIL OF FALSE MORALITY HAS BEEN LIFTED FROM MY EYES! I NOW SEE YOU CLEARLY!

YOU'RE NEITHER DEMON NOR ANGEL! YOU'RE MERELY A DIFFERENT POINT OF VIEW... NO MORE THAN A DIFFERENT...



...REALITY!



WELCOME BACK TO IT! WE WERE ABOUT TO UNPLUG YOU, BUT IT APPEARS YOU'VE SAVED US THE TROUBLE!

INCREDIBLE! HE'S SHORTED OUT THE INPUT HELMET BY PURE FORCE OF WILL ALONE!

NO ONE'S EVER DONE THAT BEFORE!  
CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

## STAN LEE'S SOAPBOX

Yep, it's true—there definitely will be a sequel to the ol' best-selling ORIGINS OF MARVEL COMICS! That cheering you hear is from your local book store! And, in answer to the thousands of requests (some guy named Hymie Thousands happened to ask), these are the characters that will be featured in our own inimitable and sometimes incomprehensible style: Iron Man! Daredevil! X-Men! Avengers! Captain America! Sub-Mariner! Human Torch! Sgt. Fury! Plus another unexpected sensation whom we're saving as the surprise of the year! The only problem is, we haven't figured out a title for the book yet. Dunno whether to call it MORE ORIGINS, or SON OF ORIGINS, or what? If you've any suggestions, don't be bashful. And if you haven't bought the original ORIGINS OF MARVEL COMICS yet, better not delay too long. No telling how many sequels will be published, and you won't wanna be the only one in town without a full set! But now it's culture time. Wouldja believe that yours truly set some kinda record recently by speaking at five colleges in as many days! Yep, I've got a hunch that ol' Michigan State U., Augustana, Ferris State, and the University of Wisconsin won't ever be the same, to say nothing of Montreal's George Williams College. The only thing I can't figure out is why, after all this campus-hopping, Spidey hasn't gotten his doctorate yet! Or, in the words of Honest Irv Forbush, "How soon they forget!" And now, I'll leave you with this age-old riddle which has stumped wise men and sages since time immemorial: Who feeds the elephants at Monte Python's flying circus? And while you're guessing, remember—vive la bagatelle!

Excelsior

Stan

ITEM! Hang on to your FOOMbership card, Faithful One, 'cause your blushing Bullpen is about to let you in on the most long-awaited event since Judy Garland took that first fateful step over the rainbow. Almost before you could expect it, your hot-blooded House of Ideas will be unleashing a brand-new, pulse-pounding magazine destined to become one of the biggest and brightest stars in the hit-studded Marvel heavens, our own artful adaptation of one of the greatest children's fantasy series of all time—"THE WIZARD OF OZ!" Everyone here at Mad. Ave. is so proud of our peerless project that we've made sure only the best of the Bullpen will produce it; so plaudits to Rascally ROY THOMAS and Big JOHN BUSCEMA

for corraling the most sought-after assignment to come down the pike in ages, thus gaining a chance to prove that brawny, bold barbarians aren't the only wonderment they're more than capable of producing. We can't tell you exactly when this Marvel Munchkin Masterwork will be hitting your newsstands, or its size and shape (we don't want the Wicked Witch of the West to find out), but you can bet your ruby slippers that it'll be well worth waiting for! So if you've ever wondered what would happen if the madness of Marvel joined forces with the genius of L. FRANK BAUM, this is your chance to find out! Don't miss it, Marvelite—you know how angry Toto gets!

ITEM! It seems congratulations are in order for the remarkable Mr. Buscema in more ways than one. Not only has he copped the juiciest artistic plum in Marvelcom's plum-filled history, but even as we pen these imperishable words, Joltin' John has embarked upon a new career—as the head of his very own ART SCHOOL! If you've ever dreamed of learning at the side of one of comicdom's all-time greats, here's your chance! Just keep your eyes glued to our cataclysmic classified ad pages for the next few months to learn all the details, and you may become one of the privileged ones to enroll in John's sensational course! We're counting on Mr. Buscema to start turning out the most talented new artists of all—and you could be one of them! 'Nuff Said!

ITEM! While we're on the subject of congratulations, let's hear it for Artful ARCHIE GOODWIN, who's returning to the fold after far too long an absence, to replace Dauntless DON MCGREGOR as the erudite Editor of several of Marvel's block-busting black-and-white magazines. Archie will be controlling the direction of such various and sundry items as PLANET OF THE APES, DEADLY HANDS OF KUNG FU, VAMPIRE TALES, and others. He may even turn out a comics script or two, if he can find a few spare minutes between his editorial chores and his scripting duties on the syndicated SECRET AGENT CORRIGAN newspaper strip. Don't worry about the whereabouts of Dauntless Don, by the way. Mr. McGregor is still very much with us, turning out scripts for the Black Panther in JUNGLE ACTION, Killraven in AMAZING ADVENTURES, and his newest acquisition, LUKE CAGE, POWER MAN, a mag begun, just a few years back, by Artful Archie himself! (There's a note of irony in there somewhere, but don't ask us what it is!) In the meanwhile, welcome back, Arch—it's good to have you aboard!

ITEM! Pardon us for blushing, but the nominations for the 1974 SHA-

ZAM AWARDS have just been announced by the ACADEMY OF COMIC BOOK ARTS, and mighty Marvel walked away with so many of the various categories that it's almost embarrassing. Just take a gander for yourself—and you'll see what we mean! Best Penciller, Humor Division: DAN DeCARLO, FRANK ROBERGE, MARIE SEVERIN, and GEORGE WILDMAN. Best Inker, Humor Division: RUDY LAPICK, RALPH REESE, FRANK ROBERGE, MARIE SEVERIN, and GEORGE WILDMAN. Best Writer, Humor Division: NICK CUTI, STEVE GERBER, JOE GILL, and STEVE SKEATES. Best Penciller, Dramatic Division: JOHN BUSCEMA, GENE COLAN, and BERNI WRIGHTSON. Best Inker, Dramatic Division: FRANK GIACIOIA, DICK GIOR-DANO, TOM PALMER, and JOE SINNOTT. Best Writer, Dramatic Division: STEVE GERBER, ARCHIE GOODWIN, and ROY THOMAS. (Seems the Bullpen virtually swept the dramatic categories, don't it?) Best Letterer: JOHN COSTANZA, ANNETTE KAWECKI, GASPARD SALADINO, and ARTIE SIMEK. Best Colorist: MARIE SEVERIN, GLYNIS WEIN, and TAT-JANA WOOD. Superior Achievement by an Individual: BARRY SMITH, ROY THOMAS, and JIM STARLIN. Best Continuing Feature: CONAN THE BARBARIAN, TOMB OF DRACULA, and MAN-THING. Best Individual Story, "Gottterdammerung," "Night of the Stalker," and "Red Nails." Best Individual Short Story: "Burma Sky," "Cathedral Perilous," and "Jenifer." Best Humor Story: "The Boob Rubbe Story," "The ECCH-orcist," "Kasper the Dead Baby," and "Police Gory Story." (Sounds like the contents page from an issue of CRAZY magazine!) Outstanding New Talent: PAUL GULACY, AL MILGROM, ANNETTE KAWECKI, and CRAIG RUSSELL. Hall of fame: JACK KIRBY, ALEX TOTH, and WALLY WOOD. We'll give you a complete rundown of the wistful winners in just a few months, so keep watchin', hear?

ITEM! A tip of the slightly-battered Marvel bowler to the members of the prestigious PITTSBURGH COM-IX CLUB for the rousing reception they gave Powerhouse, PAUL GULACY and Guest of Honor, Lively LEN WEIN, at the first annual PITTCOM, held the home of the Super Bowl Steelers just a few weeks past. The interest, enthusiasm, and gracious hospitality shown Len and Paul by Blushing BEN PONDEXTER and the rest of the gang will not soon be forgotten. Muchas Gracias, Pittsburgh—and keep those homefires burning!

ITEM! We've got just about enough room left to tell you we've got no more room left for this go-round! See ya in thirty!

# CAPTAIN MARVEL

in THE BIG BANG!!



CALLING CAPTAIN MARVEL! THIS IS SPACE SHIP 49! WE HAVE INTERCEPTED A MESSAGE FROM NITRO HEADQUARTERS!

WHAT'S THAT CREEP UP TO NOW?

THE MESSAGE REVEALS A PLOT FOR A BIG BLOW UP--THE BIGGEST YET!

MUST BE AN ATTACK ON FORT KNOX!

NOPE! THAT'S NOT IT...

EITHER WAY--I'LL HAVE TO SET A TRAP!

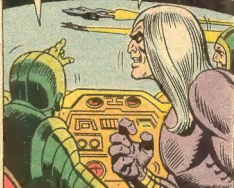
MEANWHILE...

HAH! I'LL BLOW MYSELF A HOLE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE OCEAN SO BIG, IT'LL FLOOD THE WORLD!



NITRO! LOOK! CAPTAIN MARVEL IS ESCORTING THAT SHIP!

MUST BE CARRYING VALUABLE CARGO! LET'S FOLLOW HIM FIRST!



LOOK! THE SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN IS OPENING UP!

AND MARVEL'S TURNING BACK--THE SHIP WAS PROBABLY ON REMOTE CONTROL!

LET'S CAPTURE THAT SHIP AND GET THE TREASURE!



HA! THEY'RE TAKING THE BAIT!

LATER INSIDE THE MOUNTAIN...

MMM-- WE'VE GOT ENOUGH HOSTESS TWINKIES TO LAST A MONTH!

WOW! GOLDEN SPONGE CAKE WITH CREAMY FILLING INSIDE!

THAT WILL KEEP NITRO BUSY FOR A WHILE! I KNEW HE'D GET A BIG BANG OUT OF HOSTESS TWINKIES!



NOW--TO BLAST HIS HEADQUARTERS!



MMM--

CHOMP CHOMP

YOU GET A BIG DELIGHT IN EVERY BITE OF HOSTESS® TWINKIES®!

THAT'S PROBABLY BECAUSE NONE OF YOUR PREVIOUS PATIENTS EVER DARED ENTER YOUR DOORWAY TO MADNESS BEFORE!

SUCH A TERRIFYING YET INVALUABLE EXPERIENCE GAINS FOR A PERSON AN INCREDIBLE PERCEPTION OF ONE'S OWN INNER WORKINGS!

FOR THE FIRST TIME I UNDERSTAND THE MAGUS!



BUT I'VE HAD TO PAY A HIGH PRICE FOR THIS KNOWLEDGE!

YOU SEE, I HAD TO SURRENDER MYSELF TO MADNESS! WHAT I MEAN IS, WELL, I'M NOW QUITE INSANE!



I NOW SEE THINGS AS THE MAGUS DOES, YET I'VE NOT ABANDONED MY OTHER VIEWS OF REALITY AS HE'S DONE!

THIS ALTERATION IN THOUGHT MAY NOW GIVE ME THE INSIGHT NECESSARY TO DEFEAT THE MAGUS! OR...

...IT MAY DESTROY ME!



THEN AGAIN, IT MAY GIVE ME THE FINAL VICTORY I SEEK!

YOU!



I SENSED YOU WERE NEAR!

I SEE... YOUR ALTERED CONSCIOUSNESS IS BEGINNING TO WORK FOR YOU ALREADY!

YOU SEEM SURPRISED THAT I'M AWARE OF THE CHANGE WITHIN YOU!



YOU STILL REFUSE TO ACCEPT ME AS YOUR FUTURE -- JUST AS I REMEMBER!



DO YOU ALSO 'RECALL' THAT THIS IS THE MOMENT THAT I FINALLY REALIZED THAT YOU ARE NOT ALL YOU PRETEND TO BE!



OF COURSE, YOU'VE FINALLY PENETRATED MY DISGUISE!




MY 'WIZARD OF OZ' DECEPTION HAS SERVED ITS PURPOSE!

SO AT LAST I CAN FINALLY REVEAL MY TRUE SELF TO YOU!







I AM THE **TRUE**  
**MAGUS!**

MY PLANS REQUIRED  
A STAND-IN UP TILL  
NOW! I NEEDED TO  
KEEP YOU  
OFF-BALANCE...  
UNCERTAIN!

OTHERWISE, YOU  
MIGHT HAVE BEEN  
ABLE TO ALTER  
MY PAST--  
YOUR FUTURE!

BUT THE DANGER OF  
THAT HAPPENING HAS  
PASSED! WE'VE COME  
TOO FAR DOWN THE  
PATH OF MY CREATION!

YOU'VE **LOST**, WARLOCK!

THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NOTHING  
YOU CAN DO TO CHANGE WHAT'S  
ABOUT TO OCCUR!

**NEXT: MADNESS** IN THE **HOUSE OF THE MAGUS!**